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Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Funding for N.B. Aboriginal Forestry Initiative (04/09/27)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - Andy Scott, federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced funding of $3.1 million for the New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative as part of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program.

"This project is clearly going to make a positive difference in the career choices open to Aboriginal peoples, and a definite contribution to the prosperity of local communities and Canada's economy as a whole," Scott said. "The Government of Canada is proud to be part of a project that will strengthen Canada's Aboriginal labour force by ensuring long- term sustainable employment and address the increasing need for technicians and foresters." Scott spoke on behalf of Joe Volpé, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, and R. John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources Canada.

Combined funding from all partners will be of $5.4 million, and the expected result for this initiative is the creation of about 100 long-term forestry-related jobs and skills upgrading for about 200 Aboriginal people. The forestry sector is an important part of the New Brunswick economy, contributing to over 15,000 direct jobs and almost as many indirect opportunities, as well as accounting for annual wages and salaries of about $925 million.

"This project will foster greater opportunities for Aboriginal employment through partnerships with Mi'kmaq and Maliseet communities," said New Brunswick Justice Minister Brad Green, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. "The leadership of Aboriginal partners, their foresight and spirit of co-operation are key to the project's success."

As part of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Natural Resources Canada will be working in collaboration with the New Brunswick Forest Products Association, the provincial Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat and New Brunswick's five Aboriginal Agreement Holders under Canada's Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) that includes the Mawiw Tribal Council, the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, the North Shore Micmac District Tribal Council, First Nations Human Resources Development Corporation, and the St. John River Valley Tribal Council.

"The ASEP approach brings us to the table with industry and government as full partners

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committed to securing sustainable employment and safeguarding the forests as a renewable resource," said Chief Robert Atwin, on behalf of the five Aboriginal partners.

Today's announcement was made at the Atlantic Forestry Centre, one of Natural Resources Canada's five forestry research centres, and marks the start-up of a four-year training and skills development initiative that will enable Aboriginal peoples in New Brunswick to acquire transferable skills and take advantage of forestry employment opportunities throughout the province.

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program is part of the Government of Canada's commitment to working with Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders to provide high quality, culturally relevant education for Aboriginal learners that will help them to achieve their educational needs and aspirations. The program complements the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy, the five-year initiative that began in 1999.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Background information follows. MEDIA CONTACTS: Media Relations Office, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 819-994-5559; Gary Toft, communications, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 506-453-6543; Ghyslain Charron, Media Relations, Natural Resources Canada, 613-992-4447; Jennyfer Tolley, Communications Officer, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 902-661-6214.

Backgrounder - New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative under the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program is a five-year initiative with total funding of $85 million. Its overall objective is to create sustainable employment for Aboriginal peoples in major economic initiatives such as Northern mining, oil and gas, forestry and hydro development projects across Canada, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families and individuals. The New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative expects to result in about 100 long-term forestry-related jobs and skills upgrading for 200 Aboriginal people.

ASEP funding proposals are submitted by a partnership consortium, which may include parties from the private sector, Aboriginal groups, and the province or territory where the large economic or resource-based project is located. Other key partners include learning institutions, sector councils, labour, and other Government of Canada departments or agencies. Each partnership consortium must set out a comprehensive training-to-employment plan for Aboriginal peoples that link skills development to specific job opportunities in Aboriginal communities.

A significant amount of funding for a project is expected from the private sector; the Government of Canada's normal contribution to a proposal will not exceed 75 per cent. The private sector must also demonstrate, at minimum, 50 long-term sustainable jobs for Aboriginal peoples at the completion of funding from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

ASEP is administered nationally by HRSDC in conjunction with regional offices. It also

complements the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS), the five-year initiative that began in 1999 and whose renewal was confirmed in the 2004 Speech from the Throne, and re-affirmed in this year's federal budget.

As part of the ASEP program, the New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative is among the first five projects approved for funding from the proposals since the launch of ASEP in October 2003.

New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative

The forestry sector is an important part of the New Brunswick economy. It contributes to 15,000 direct jobs and almost as many indirect opportunities throughout the province. Aboriginal peoples are well positioned to help alleviate anticipated shortages of skilled technicians and foresters.

The consortium includes the following partners:

Government:

- Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (Province of New Brunswick)
- Natural Resources Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Aboriginal Partners:

- First Nations Human Resources Development Corp.
- Mawiw Tribal Council
- New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council
- North Shore Micmac District Tribal Council
- St. John River Valley Tribal Council

Industry:

- New Brunswick Forest Products Association

Funding:

The total estimated budget for this initiative is $5.4 million.

- HRSDC: $2.8 million
- First Nations Forestry Program (a joint initiative of Natural Resources Canada and Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada): $280,000
- Province of New Brunswick: $240,000
- First Nations Aboriginal Partners: $280,000
- New Brunswick Forest Products Association: $240,000

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